

**ANNUAL REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS**  
**FY2010**  
***Arizona State Braille and Talking Book Library***

**VISION: THAT ALL MAY READ**

**MISSION:**

To provide books, magazines and other library resources in alternate formats for all Arizona residents whose visual or physical disabilities prevent the reading of conventional print materials.

**Providing Access**

Emphasis this year at the Braille and Talking Book Library (BTBL) Division has been on the transition from audio books on analog tape to books in the new digital format. Digital Talking Book Machines (DTBMs) began arriving in September 2009. As required by federal law, we sent them first to every veteran who said they wanted to try one. Second we sent them to any patron 100 years of age or more who wanted one and then began working through the waiting list of all other interested patrons.



As of the end of June 2010 there were 4,300 patrons who had received their new digital players. The biggest challenge was not having as many digital books as patrons would like. There were some delays in book production but the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) resolved those as quickly as they could. More books have been arriving every week for several months now. At the end of June there were 2,509 titles for patrons to choose from and a total of 15,727 copies in the collection.

For any patron interested in downloading digital books the number of titles available was approximately 18,000. These are available from the NLS BARD (Braille and Audio Reading Download) site. To date only 9% of patrons with digital players have signed up to use BARD. The staff has encouraged patrons to try BARD. It's been promoted in flyers that went out with each digital player, in the newsletter and whenever staff does presentations or outreach events. The majority of BTBL patrons still prefer to receive their audio books by mail and staff is doing the best they can to send books in their interest areas. There is a new section on the website all about BARD including step-by-step instructions on downloading.

The machine section supervisor and machine clerk have both become very proficient at helping guide patrons through the steps to be successful at using BARD and the other download option, Greater Phoenix Digital Library. The machine section supervisor has provided hands on training for patrons willing to come to the library. He and the public services librarian in charge of institutional accounts provided training for staff at the Southwest Blind Rehab Center at the V.A. Medical Center in Tucson. They instructed staff in the operation of the new digital players and how to download materials from BARD. Six digital players were assigned to the facility for use in training rehabilitation program participants.

Veterans receiving training are encouraged to sign up for individual accounts with BTBL so they can receive their own DTBM and digital books by mail.

### **Promoting Collaboration**

From October 2009 through June 2010 a total of 234 volunteers donated 17,059 hours to the Braille and Talking Book Library for a value to the state of \$345,435. There were 90 involved in the recording program as readers, directors, reviewers and editors. With the digital books more of the final editing can be done without re-recording sections and therefore this new volunteer position was added. The editor can remove small extraneous sounds that were not noticed in the initial recording. They also add markup to help patrons navigate within the book and change many things that need to be done differently to prepare the book for a digital cartridge instead of cassettes. All references to sides and cassettes need to be removed.

Although the number of machine and book repair volunteers has declined over the last few years there are still 42. Between October and June volunteers and staff repaired 1,731 talking book cassette players and 3,511 cassette books. Volunteers also repaired 1,669 amp boards down to component level. The amp boards are sent back to NLS for distribution to other states. Many of the machine and book repair volunteers are Telecom Pioneers. Pioneers have now been repairing talking book machines for NLS network libraries for 50 years. They began repairing machines in Arizona before the library was here. For several years talking book players were distributed by the Department of Economic Security until 1990 when the machine division was transferred to the library.

As in previous years there were several groups that volunteered at the library. Some came every week like the group from Gompers and some one time each year like the group from Medtronics. A new group of high school students began volunteering. These were all students with various types of disabilities. Each student was given a certificate of appreciation at the end of the semester and one continued to volunteer on her own through the summer. She comes each week on Dial-a-Ride.

Several new outreach volunteers were added this year. The Volunteer Manager and Outreach Librarian provided training and supplies of outreach materials. A member of the Friends Board helped assign volunteers to events. This addition significantly increased the number of outreach events and presentations attended this year. The number of programs/activities increased from 52 in FY09 to 304 in FY10. Number of attendees went from 3,184 to 7,112. Volunteers were recognized for their contributions at the annual recognition luncheon funded by Arizona Friends of Talking Books. The event was held March 21 at the Glendale Civic Center. The theme this year was "Volunteers are like sunshine – they make good things grow!" Six volunteers were recognized for reaching 1,000 hours of service to the library. This brought the total number of thousand hour volunteers to 227. Two volunteers were honored with "Lifetime Achievement" awards for over 25 years as Talking Book Library volunteers. Linda Montgomery

presented plaques with golden cassettes to narrators Louella Marshall and Olive Swearingin.



Louella Marshall and Linda Montgomery    Olive Swearingin and Linda Montgomery

A BTBL studio volunteer Dwight Brahs was recognized by AVACA (Association of Volunteer Administrators of Central Arizona) for his contributions to the library. In the 26 years he has volunteered, Dwight has been a reader or director on 62 audio books. He has a mellow reading voice and is adept at directing other readers. His dedication is unwavering. When he commits to a book project, it will be completed in a careful, professional manner. Dwight is an anchor in the recording studio program. He wholeheartedly supports the library's vision "That all may read".

At the October 2009 BTBL open house, 22 volunteers helped with set-up, tours and refreshments. They contributed greatly to making it a success. Arizona Friends of Talking Books provided the funding. Volunteer Sarah Raum brought bottled water donated by the Target store she works for and also brought other Target employees to volunteer with her.



Volunteer Barbara Pastore brought her granddaughter to help.



Don and Alma Myers staffed the volunteer table.